

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 L-01 OES-02 INR-05 SSO-00
INRE-00 SP-02 /033 W
-----034454 181719Z /53
O 181543Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1168

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUCHAREST 5828

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OEXC, TGEN, RO
SUBJECT: US-ROMANIAN SCIENCE EXCHANGE PROGRAM

REF: STATE 208041

1. I AM DEEPLY PUZZLED AND CONCERNED OVER PROCESS WHICH
RESULTED IN ANNOUNCEMENT TO ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR OF POTEN-
TIAL MAJOR CHANGE IN US APPROACH TO VITAL ELEMENT OF US-
ROMANIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BY SENIOR OFFICIAL IN ONE
AMERICAN INSTITUTION, WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION OR CO-
ORDINATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF STATE OR THIS EMBASSY

2. SINCE I HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY CONCERNED WITH HEALTH OF
NSF/NCST PROGRAM SINCE MY ARRIVAL HERE, I AM FULLY AWARE
THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THESE TWO INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAM
UNDER THEIR STEWARDSHIP BY TERMS OF MOU HAVE BEEN PLAGUED
WITH DIFFICULTIES AND ARE IN NEED OF SERIOUS IMPROVEMENT,
POSSIBLY EXTENDING TO SUBSTANTIAL REVAMPING. BY SAME TOKEN
HOWEVER, I AM ALSO ACUTELY AWARE THAT NSF/NCST COOPERATIVE
SCIENCE PROGRAM IS CRITICAL ELEMENT IN DELICATE NETWORK OF
SCIENCE EXCHANGES WHICH HAS BEEN CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED OVER
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YEARS BETWEEN US AND ROMANIA. THIS PROGRAM HAD ITS GENESIS
IN PRESIDENTIAL DECISION AND HAS ENJOYED SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE-
MENT OF HIGHEST LEVELS OF BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS TO PRESENT
DAY. IF ONLY FOR THIS REASON, IT IS NOT A RELATIONSHIP THAT
CAN BE SUMMARILY SEVERED, ESPECIALLY BY DECISION TAKEN AND
IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT ADVICE AND CONSENT OF PRINCIPAL FOREIGN
POLICY AGENCY, THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND PRESIDENT'S

PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN ROMANIA.

3. I RECOGNIZE THAT DEPARTMENT CONFRONTS BOTH INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY PROBLEMS IN DEALING WITH QUESTION OF THIS KIND. AS MATTER OF POLICY, DEPARTMENT HOLDS THAT EAST-WEST EXCHANGES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUST BE DEFENSIBLE ON SCIENTIFIC AS WELL AS POLITICAL GROUNDS, AND AS INSTITUTION DEPARTMENT IS NOT ITSELF WELL EQUIPPED TO PASS JUDGMENT ON PURELY SCIENTIFIC MERITS OF PARTICULAR PROGRAMS SUCH AS THIS ONE.

4. AT SAME TIME, I BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT CONFRONTATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND FOREIGN POLICY BENEFITS, IN THIS CASE AT LEAST, IS BASED ON FALSE DICHOTOMY. NSF/NCST SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION HAS PRODUCED AT LEAST SOME SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS -- WHETHER OR NOT PROGRAM JUSTIFIES CONTINUED OUTLAY OF RESOURCES AT CURRENT LEVELS -- AND HAS CONFERRED SOME POLITICAL BENEFITS, AS KEYSTONE OF MAJOR ELEMENT IN OVERALL BILATERAL EXCHANGES. CONVERSELY, POLITICAL SPONSORSHIP AND BLESSING HAVE MADE SCIENTIFIC BENEFITS OBTAINED UP TO NOW POSSIBLE, AT LEAST IN PART, AND IS SURELY KEY TO TAPPING POTENTIAL FOR GREATER SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENT, BENEFICIAL TO SCIENTISTS AND GOVERNMENTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, IN FUTURE. AS DR. BARTOCHA SAID, QUALITY OF ROMANIAN SCIENCE IS NOT IN QUESTION. PROBLEM, AS I TAKE IT, IS TO FIND WAYS TO PUT SCIENTISTS AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS TOGETHER TO OPTIMIZE BENEFITS OF US AND ROMANIAN SCIENTIFIC QUALITY FOR BOTH COUNTRIES. SOLVING THIS PROBLEM
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IS NOT, CANNOT AND -- TO MY WAY OF THINKING-- SHOULD NOT BE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF NSF.

5. TIMING CONSIDERATIONS ILLUSTRATE INEXTRICABLE INTER-PENETRATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS. ON THE ONE HAND, HAVING AMBASSADOR CONFIRM DECISION OF ONE WASHINGTON INSTITUTION AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME, BY REITERATING MENACE OF TRANSFERRING FUNDS TO MORE PRODUCTIVE AREA PROGRAMS PER PARA 3 (B) REF A, WOULD SPARK UNWARRANTED DOUBTS AS TO US INTENTIONS AT MOMENT OF HIGH VOLATILITY (SEE ALSO REF B ON SCINTEIA EDITORIAL CLEARLY RELATED TO PACEPA CASE). CONVERSELY, SOME SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES RELATING TO CURRENT PROGRAM ARISE FROM FACTORS HAVING LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH SCIENTIFIC MERITS. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, CONSTANTINESCU TRAVEL IS CURRENTLY AWAITING FINAL CLEARANCE FROM SECURITY AUTHORITIES. IT MAY THEREFORE BE HOSTAGE TO SAME VOLATILITY REFERRED TO ABOVE. IN OTHER WORDS, IF CONSTANTINESCU DOES NOT TRAVEL, REASONS MAY BE RELATED TO NSF/NCST PROGRAM PROBLEMS ONLY IN SENSE THAT NSF DECISION COMES AT INOPPORTUNE TIME AND IS SERIOUSLY MISREAD BY GOR. COMPLEXITY OF FACTORS, IN ANY EVENT, CAN BE FULLY ASSESSED ONLY BY ALL INVOLVED AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON, BEGINNING WITH DEPARTMENT, WORKING IN CLOSE COORDINATION.

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INRE-00 SSO-00 /033 W
-----034584 181719Z /53

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUCHAREST 5828

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6. FURTHER, TALKING POINTS SUGGESTED FOR MY TALK WITH AMBASSADOR BOGDAN DO NOT PROVIDE BASIS FOR PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSION. ROMANIANS HAVE EITHER HEARD THEM BEFORE, OR THEY HAVE ALREADY HEARD POINTS WHICH GO BEYOND THEM, I.E. NCST HAS BEEN INFORMED BY NSF THAT THERE IS NO NEW MONEY IN FY79 APPROPRIATION REQUEST FOR ROMANIAN PROGRAM, AND KNOWS THAT RUNDING UNCERTAINTY IS NOT REALLY CRITICAL ELEMENT IN NSF DELIBERATIONS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TO RENEW MOU. CONSEQUENTLY, REFERENCE TO BUDGETARY UNKNOWNNS WOULD LEAVE THEM MERELY PERPLEXED, IF NOT WORSE.

7. IN ORDER TO SOLICIT FROM BOGDAN A STATEMENT REALLY COMMITTING GOR TO TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE MORE GENUINE COOPERATION, I REQUIRE A LIST OF SPECIFIC PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED IN NSF/NCST PROGRAM AND SPECIFIC ACTIONS DEPARTMENT AND NSF BELIEVE SHOULD BE TAKEN TO SOLVE THEM AND TO RESTORE PROGRAM TO SOUND FOOTING. IN PAST, WE HAVE PRESENTED LISTS OF PROBLEMS AND MADE GENERAL STATEMENTS THAT THEY MUST BE SOLVED BEFORE NEW MOU CAN BE SIGNED. HOWEVER, TIME HAS COME FOR SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS. I BELIEVE ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES WOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THIS APPROACH, AND TO NO OTHER. WITHOUT BILL OF PARTICULARS, DISCUSSION OF NSF/NCST PROGRAM AT MY
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LEVEL WILL PROVOKE UNHELPFULLY WIDE-RANGING DOUBTS, BUT NO SOLUTIONS.

8. I REALIZE THAT FORMULATION OF LIST DESCRIBED IN PARA 7 ABOVE WILL ALSO REQUIRE STRONG DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE AND INPUT WITH NSF, AND MAY EVENTUALLY REQUIRE NSC INPUT AND POSSIBLY ARBITRATION AS WELL. BUT I AM HOPEFUL THAT THIS NECESSARY EFFORT WILL ESTABLISH PRECEDENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION IN HANDLING OF US-ROMANIAN SCIENCE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS. SUCH COORDINATION IS IN MY VIEW KEY TO SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE PLAGUED PROGRAM IN RECENT YEARS, OVER LONG TERM. I HAVE REQUESTED MEETING WITH BOGDAN FOR FRIDAY, AUGUST 25.
AGGREY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUCHAR05828
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780338-0631
Format: TEL
From: BUCHAREST
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780845/aaaablhi.tel
Line Count: 185
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 50f25160-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS, STADIS
Reference: 78 STATE 208041
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1685482
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-ROMANIAN SCIENCE EXCHANGE PROGRAM
TAGS: OEXC, TGEN, RO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/50f25160-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014